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Considerations for government when purchasing a drone

- Determine what federal, state and local laws and regulations govern the use of UAVs in your area.

- Purchase lead times for drones are short. Most units are mass-designed and delivered ready to fly. Nevertheless, an RFP for a UAV should include a detailed explanation for the application for the aircraft, the type and quantity needed, the desired timeline for delivery, and performance and quality specifications.

- Insure that the equipment is appropriate to the use. For example, the quality of the onboard camera should be carefully scrutinized based on what task the UAV will perform.

- Safety should always be a top priority. UAVs purchased should have the ability to detect and avoid other aircraft and should have appropriate running lights. UAV pilots will require training to safely operate them.

- Drones may be hacked just like any other piece of wireless technology. Cybersecurity protocols must be taken into consideration, especially for the data link that connects the drone with the operating ground station and controlling pilot.

- Evaluate whether a drone(s) should be owned or leased and whether maintenance and record-keeping should be outsourced or done in-house.

- Develop a written, publicly available policy that governs the use of drones, including retention of data collected.